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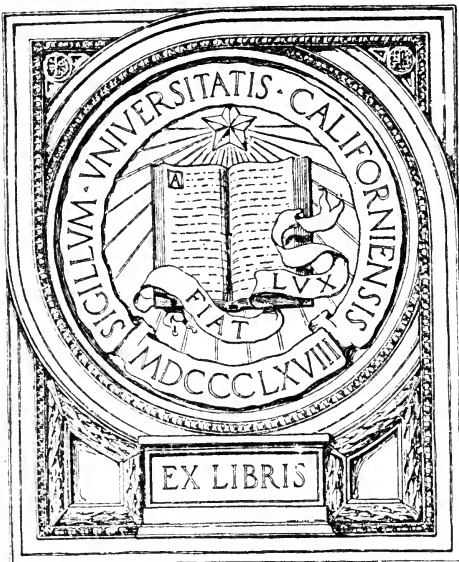
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Twenty Sonnets To California



Emmet Pendleton

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Emmet Pendleton



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Twenty Sonnets

TO CALIFORNIA

AND OTHER SUBJECTS

BY

EMMET PENDLETON



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EMMET PENDLETON

TO THE
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TO
MY MOTHER
THESE TWENTY SONNETS
ARE RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED

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BY
EMMET PENDLETON

Foreword

When these sonnets were written, they were not intended for publication, but friends encouraged that they be put in book form, so I now set them forth to face the ordeal. I, myself, do not place much faith in their merit, for they were never written from a literary standpoint. They were a sort of a diary. What ever impressed me I commented upon it in this manner, therefore their meaning is clearer, and they are of greater interest to me than they would be to any reader.

This book was to have been published several years ago, but owing to a few rhythmic errors, that were found when the book was near completion, flaws that had escaped my notice when I had read the proof, the work was discontinued for the time being. That book would have contained over thirty sonnets. I cut them down to the present number because there appears such a marked contrast between my earlier and later thoughts. Quite a few of the sonnets included in this pamphlet were written during my High School days. My reason for not publishing my later sonnets, although I personally feel that they are more

Foreword

worthy, is that since these presented were to have formed the nucleus to that book, and as this is the fulfillment of those previous plans I feel I should not change the contents.

One person suggested that I should have shown more respect with my dedication. Perhaps I should! However, I know, my mother saw their growth, knows their crudity, understands their clarity, and at least for my sake gives them an appreciation.

I take this means of thanking Mrs. Emma Cogswell of Klamath Falls, Oregon. She was very kind to encourage and help me in this work. I am also especially indebted to Wm. M. Allen, of Red Bluff, California. He was the first to see any worth to these sonnets, and it is entirely due to his untiring efforts that they are placed in this book form. Several other friends have given timely suggestion, and I sincerely appreciate their interest.

Emmet Pendleton

Red Bluff, California.

May 1, 1912

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To a California Sunset

The entire western sky is all ablaze
With many splendid pyrotechnics grand,
That burn up brightly in King Hesper's land,
For great Apollo's sparkling daily rays,
Whose final gorgeous colors now amaze,
Do best since they have reached their nightly strand;
And Zephyrus shifts upon the scene a band
Of fleecy clouds with ev'ning's quiet haze.
The eventide is here. The closing day
Is marked with aspects grand of Nature's store,
An end befitting of the greatest thing;
And now from this magnificent array
Of color and of quietude, what more
Could one expect the Last Great Day to bring!



To Amos Edwin Clark

His eyes are of the grayish pearly blue,
 And rather short he wears his flaxen hair,
 So rightly one can call him extra fair;
 'Tis he of all the boys I ever knew—
 (You truly know that they have not been few)—
 Whose many qualities were fine and rare,
 And yet a boy so full of life and dare,
 Whose lasting friendship proved to be most true.
 These thoughts of him recall a joyous time,
 Those rapid flying dear old High School days,
 That now to me have lost their weary strife,
 But thus remain as being most sublime,
 And bring the wish that those dear happy ways
 Will follow his as well as all my life.



To a California Springtime

The fragrance of the manzanita flowers
Is calmly whiffed in gentle air to fill
The country wide; the rocky glade and hill,
Which chaparal converts to snowy bowers,
In warming sunshine bask in tranquil hours,
And in the fields with animated thrill,
The golden poppies nod in beauty still,
While idly in mid-air the buzzard towers.
The spring-time's here; while nature's worthy sap
Is rising in the plants with ardent swell,
To cause them all to bud and do their best,
The blood of mankind in a drowsy nap,
Feels not this inward energetic spell
But dreaming yearns for melancholy rest.





IV



To My Peach Tree

My lonely peach tree has just been in bloom,
And filled my garden with a quaint perfume,
That gentle blowing breezes did consume,
To scatter in the outdoor's spacious room;
But winds, though gentle, are not good to groom
A dainty blossom touched with fairy fume,
And caused to burst forth freshly from its glume
A spring's glad tidings over winter's gloom.
So now the flowers are gone. A very few,
Who knew its beauty, could appreciate
The dainty workmanship of each pink flower,
But yet if they did not, the insects knew,
And worked most ardently from morn till late
At night in joyous buzz about that bower.



V

To Tuscan Buttes

Those mighty Buttes of hard volcanic trass,
That have thus stood through ages safe and sound,
Survey the country wide for miles around,
And stand as land marks in this plain so crass,
A plain of rocks, just one lavatic mass;
Their value is not much, it will be found,
But yet I love the grandeur they abound,
The sparing coat they wear of brush and grass.
They saw the two extremes of human race:
The Diggers live their lives in artless way,
And idly rove this valley so heartfree,
And then the white man come and take their place
With all his crafts, his struggle day by day.
I wonder now what are they yet to see!



VI

To Mrs. Blanche McCalvy

Those grapes of Zeuxis won for him a name,
And caused the birds to sing a roundelay;
Parrhasius, of that same ancient day,
By his great curtain picture gained the same;
Acanthus gave Callimachus his fame;
Apelles' picture set beside a way
Did cause the horses all to loudly neigh,
That near this rudely treated picture came.
But why consider men of days gone by,
When we have equals at the present date,
Who paint with such a ceaseless pain and care
They do much more than to deceive the eye?
I've seen the rose in such a perfect state,
The air was filled with every fragrance rare.



VII

To a California Sunrise

The last pale rays of Phosphor do their worst,
And fondly lingering gives his final flings
Of light to earth. A cooling breeze then brings
A group of fleecy clouds that slowly burst
To thus display Aurora, who is first
To wake and cross the sky on lightest wings;
Apollo then through morning's portals springs,
And for his daily course shows eager thirst.
It is the birth of day. A soberness,
That follows close upon the somber night,
Is lifted with the dew from off the land,
And now the earth, so full of sprightliness,
Gives many hearty cheers with all its might
To California's morning, fine and grand.





VIII



To a Pine Tree

Consider how that pine on yonder height
Has grown to such a tree among those rocks,
To make all others seem to it as mocks;
It too was once a sapling green and bright,
That grew and loved to grow in warm sunlight,
Until each branch o'er others interlocks;
And now old age bring many worldly knocks
By mars of surly knots and sooty blight.
How like unto our lives! The others strived
To gain this same great stately prominence,
Which now this one by great Ambition's thrill
Has gained through snowy storms and fires, and lived
As if it were designed by Providence
To thus become the pride of this vast hill.





IX



To Mount Shasta

This high and mighty mountain of the North,
So massive and with such a contour bold,
Would fascinate the Grecian Gods of old
Till famed Olympus soon would lose its worth
For them, and they would then come forth
In joy to revel, when the sun would mold
The snowy brow to most attractive gold,
Such as they never did before in mirth.
'Tis magic; for all that survey agree
This pond'rous mound of earth is but a guide
That casts o'er all a noble influence,
To climb, to grow, be big and thus to see
The hills, the valleys and the country wide
And be beheld in great magnificence.



X

To the Game

I laughed a sneering laugh at grewsome Fate,
The chances all in all were oh, so few,
And each of these I felt I so well knew
To win and always win at any rate,
That I ne'er stopped for once to contemplate
That even I would meet a Waterloo,
My luck might change, calamity ensue,
That I might lose my all when hours grow late.
The time did come. The torture of my mind
Made me a demon to the circumstance;
A nervous fever then my thoughts so whirled
That anguish made existence one hard grind.
It all was gone. Not even hopeful chance
Was left to help me turn to face the world.



XI



To William M. Allen

The fervent spirits to create abound
In Man, that, satisfied in striving thrill,
The pleasure of creation, there is still
Desire, when imperfection is so found,
To yet continue. Flaws are all around;
For the beginners, each with timid will,
With faults their simple works no greater fill,
Than masters, whose gigantic arts astound.
Ambition to create expands the mind,
The World thus gains, but imperfection's strife,
Caused by our short existence here below,
Infects all earthly things, therefore we find
Works badly, but gives proof of second life,
The great completeness of our time here now.



XII

To a Rose Bud

But yesterday I found a bud in down
Of youth; it was so fragrant and so fair,
I wished to pluck it then, but left it there
Until it still more beautiful had grown;
But now to-day I find its beauty flown,
A change has come, the bud is stripped quite bare
Of all its charms, so that I do not care
To pluck it since it is a rose full blown.
And so procrastination has gained nought
But mars the thought that beauty did enthral,
And make me hold myself in true disdain.
For very avariciously I sought
To gain still more, but have thus lost it all,
For that same bud will never bloom again.



XIII

To my Grandmother

Can one gain favor from those grewsome Fates,
Whose hateful austere looks befit each head,
Those three, who ever spin the flimsy thread
Of human destiny? While each ^{delays} belates,
Will they see that true kindness thus belates
When they shall cut the shred with shears of lead,
To have another life add to the dead,
Amid a dirge of laughter from those mates?
Yet they are good. They gave you favored time,
By granting partial acts from year to year,
A life of seventy and eight to bring,
And robust sprightliness from health sublime.
So may you still live many Summers sear,
Before you see the long eternal Spring.



XIV

To Home

So oft to me a peaceful air will come,
Amid the irksome strife of each long day,
And cause in true kaleidoscopic way,
My mind to rush like changing billow's foam,
To pleasant thoughts of that dear place called home;
Its great influence over me each day
Is such, I could forever with it stay,
Without desire about this world to roam.
I love this place beyond my pow'r to tell
In words so limited, so very few,
To me its real, its quite unbounded worth;
For it has cast o'er me a magic spell,
Until that with exceptions none, I do
Now hold it is the dearest place on earth.



XV

To a California Gold Mine

The gold, the gold, the cravings of the man!
That calls him to the Indian Wars no more,
And lured him to the cold of Arctic shores!
But hardship never seemed to wan but fan
The cravings, and undaunted still he can
With modern ways thus take from earth's deep core
The precious metal that he does adore,
As time has changed the cradle and the pan.
For Nature's secret stores great grist and grind
Must Man endure through long laborous days,
To separate the good from worthless pelf;
So causing question thus to come to mind;
Was Nature fitted just to suit Man's ways,
Or for mantainance Man adapts himself?



XVI

To a Cactus Plant

I have an ugly spiny cactus plant,
A true disgrace unto my garden plot;
It is unsightly, for it is besot
With spots and scars and things appurtenant;
But late it showed a bloom so elegant,
A dainty blossom of the fairies got
Astray among my flowers of common lot,
A waxen beauty so extravagant!
So judge a thing not as it may appear,
For one knows not what capability
May lie concealed behind the roughest mask,
To burst forth into beauty and good cheer,
And unto life the greatest pleasure be
If left to do aright its given task.



XVII

To Sister Mary Berchmans

With lilies of the field what can compare!
What other flower that grows about the land,
Can breathe a breath of adoration grand,
As does those lilies that grows lofty there
In sweetest purity, so chaste and fair?
They waver not in Time's fast running sand
To mundane toilsome ways, but stately stand
In solemn reverence a beauty rare.
For all of purity, so fast akin
To godliness, the truths of Life revere,
And with bowed heads the noblest thoughts adore;
And in this busy age ensnared in sin,
I am so pleased to have one friend sincere,
Whose goodliness with lilies can compare.



XVIII

To the Sacramento River

Thus onward do these waters ever run,
A surging stream at willy-nilly pace,
That dances, changes yet at every space,
As if they do enjoy the sparkling fun
To so reflect the world's deep blue and dun;
Then rushing on as if in fiercest race,
Find relaxation in a soothing place,
Where, idly flowing, bask in warming sun.
It is most humanlike. This surging stream
Of mindless populace, propelled by time,
With outstretched hands trys hard to grasp the bank,
And catch one proof of their dear treasured dream,
But, getting none, flows on with hopes sublime,
For Death to add them to its unknown rank.



XIX

To the Pacific Ocean

Were I an ancient Greek, that I might hold
This stretch of water reaches to that land
Where Oceanus rules; and see so grand
Dear Amphitrite and her Neptune bold
Pace steeds of brazen-hoofs, manes of gold,
Along these foamy waves which wash this sand;
And hear loud Triton's blast; and see there stand
Among the dolphins Proteus so old.
Yet still I stand entranced. This changing sea,
Whose motion so attracts and binds the eye,
That ever swells, and flows, and ebbs spell,
Is with the mind of Man in sympathy
For waves unsettled, ever dashing high,
An inward soul that rushes on pell-mell.

XX

To a Friend

Could I but send to thee a worthy line,
A really animated word or two,
That would express my sincere thoughts of you,
My love, my wishes, hopes for thee and thine!
Could I but write in polished verses fine,
As Shakespeare did his love, nought would I do,
But turn my passions loose, my love thoughts true,
And spend these long, long days in writing rhyme.
It takes the gifted genius' hand to mold
A sonnet to a pleasing work of art,
And make each word a treasured souvenir;
So why should I, so giftless, try unfold
In rudest language, feelings of my heart,
The sentiments that are to me so dear?





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